DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 404 333 SP 037 165

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TITLE The Problem with Power: Whose Definition? "Gendered" Language Differences on Both Personal and Organizational Factors of Power with US and Canadian Teachers.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Collegiality; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Participative Decision Making; *Power Structure; Public School Teachers; *School Culture; *Sex Differences; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Empowerment; Teaching Conditions
IDENTIFIERS *Canada; *United States (Southeast)

ABSTRACT

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ED 404 333

The Problem with Power: Whose Definition?
"Gendered" Language Differences on both Personal and Organizational Factors of Power with US and Canadian Teachers

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April 8-12, 1996, New York

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Abstract

This study examined participants' beliefs and practices regarding power with personal demographic variables (gender, age, degree level, and years of experience) and school-related variables (level of school employed, type of school community, and overall citizenship) on power beliefs and practices. A principal component analysis of 668 survey responses yielded two factors which explained 51% of the common variance in responses. Factor 1 consisted of 17 items and was named organizational beliefs concerning empowerment and resource control; and factor 2, consisted of 13 items and was named personal beliefs about accountability, responsibility, a powerful educator and practices of power. Multivariate analysis of variance procedures were used to address three research questions. Results indicated that both national (US and Canadian) and state (Florida, Georgia, and Alabama) residence of employment and highest degree attained proved to be significant main effects on factors 1 and 2 respectively. Additionally, level of school and type of school community were significant interaction effects on both factors 1 and 2. Study results suggest differences between females' and males' perspectives of power, which were the basis of the survey design, were minimized by the political and social contexts in which teachers work.

Introduction

Power relationships are being called into question in schools today (Brunner, 1993; Enomoto, 1995; Marshall, 1994). The inception of empowerment in the 1990s was a means to equalize power relations in an attempt to alter traditional power relationships of top-down authority (Hargreaves, 1994). *Earlier* findings from an open-ended questionnaire revealed distinct gender differences in the language and beliefs of males and females in regard to dimensions of power (Acker-Hocevar, Touchton & Zenz, 1995). These earlier findings provided the basis for the survey development used in this study. Findings from the *initial* study indicated that present power structures in schools continued to reinforce hierarchical relationships in existing school practices that were reflective of women as an oppressed group. The language of females suggested a language of domination and control over them e.g. *access to, allowed to, afforded to,* while the language of males assumed a distinct quality of superiority as evidenced by words such as *utilize, freedom to, resourceful and expert* (Acker-Hocevar, Touchton &

Zenz, 1995). However, the seeds for the new language of empowerment were found primarily in the language of females --- a language that implied shared power.

The *present* study sought to further explore these initial findings of a gendered construction of power in relation to power beliefs in current practice. This paper presents the background, purpose, and rationale for the study. A four-part discussion of the theoretical framework follows from which conclusions to the findings of the study are drawn. A report of the method, survey development and instrumentation, demographic characteristics of the sample, data collection, analyses and results, along with a summary of conclusions and suggestions for future studies concludes the paper. Findings from this study contribute to the literature on gender studies and furnish educators with some plausible explanations as to why distinct gender differences were not found in this study, as well as how age and years of experience interacted with gender to produce variability among personal beliefs of power.

Background and Purpose

This study builds upon the findings of an earlier study in which nine open-ended questions were used to ask both inservice and preservice teachers (N=111) currently enrolled in college classes to describe their perceptions and beliefs of power (Acker-Hocevar, Touchton & Zenz, 1995). Initial findings were summarized and shared in focus groups with one-third of the respondents (Richardson, 1994). The purpose of this study was to further validate the initial findings in which gender differences with respect to the language used to describe power were found, and to determine whether a number of personal and/or context demographic variables influenced respondents' perceptions of power. Results of the initial open-ended questionnaire study (Acker-Hocevar et. al., 1995) implied that gender differences in language and power perspectives influenced power beliefs. A survey was then constructed based on participants' language to examine gender differences in power beliefs within current practice (Brunner, 1993; Kerpan, 1993; Tannen, 1994). The survey was designed and distributed to 1000 educators in Alabama,

Florida, Georgia, and Nova Scotia, with a 66.8% return rate (N=668). Items on the survey represented females' and males' perspectives of power, empowerment, responsibility, accountability and resources.

Rationale

The national debate concerning the best practices for altering power relationships in schools extends from: 1) addressing increased teacher professionalism through the *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS),* 2) *to* securing businesses' input for restructuring schools through the *Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)*, and 3) to expanding the idea of community as proposed in *Goals 2000* so as to recognize the larger political and social systems in which schools operate to successfully and effectively educate children.

Murphy (1991) argued that the accomplishment of the ambitious goals of educational reform can only be achieved through the forging of new roles and relationships among teachers, students, administrators, parents and communities. Interestingly, Futrell (1994) pointed out, however, that teachers have typically been left out of the reform debate, especially prior to the establishment of the *NBPTS.* Blount (1994) concurred with Futrell, calling teachers the "unheard voices" (p. 55) in education, subservient to administrators. This study builds on teachers' voices to further examine beliefs and practices of power and to explore the influences of other contextual variables on shaping these beliefs.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study consists of four-parts: 1) Power definitions that examine the historical perspectives of power as domination and control over teachers' work, 2) Political culture theory that explains different political and ideological philosophical orientations that influence policies and practices which govern teachers' work; 3) Group theory which describes how the enactment of spoken and

unspoken cultural rules and norms affect power beliefs in praxis; and 4) The overall significance of the context variables which moderated the beliefs of power.

Power Definitions

Power has many definitions and describes a multitude of relationships where ideological beliefs are enacted (Senge, 1990; Weick, 1995). Past definitions of power, typologies of power, and power models are useful ways to unravel present beliefs, practices, and power relationships in schools (Eisler, 1993, 1995; French, 1985; Foucault, 1972; Pfeffer, 1992; Scott, 1992; Shafritz & Ott, 1987). Political and cultural systems make up the norms, values, and beliefs within an organization. These norms shape the ways in which people view power and may explain the different constructions of power relationships in organizations (Elazar, 1972; Hackman, 1993; Kincaid, 1982; Marshall, 1994; Metz, 1990; Scott, 1992; and Weick, 1995).

For purposes of this study, power definitions that encompassed a broader political, social, and organizational context were examined. Power in its most basic definition is a force that can either create or destroy. Eisler (1993, 1995) expanded upon the ideas of creative and destructive power. She proposed a Dominator and Partnership Culture Model based on her historical study of cultures over the last 10,000 to 5,000 years (prehistory) and distinguished between the two cultural types by choices each culture made in their use of resources. Dominator cultures set up hierarchical structures and employed resources and technology to exert control over others. Partnership cultures used resources to create aesthetic places to live and shared resources amongst one another more equitably.[1] Educators are caught between what Marilyn French (1985) described as a culture pervaded by patriarchal images of duality, which she likened to Eisler's Dominator and Partnership Culture Model. For French, the only way to change the

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[1] Today Eisler believes that we are at a critical juncture in our history. She posits that we are at a place where many cultures have the opportunity to choose between moving in the direction of partnership ultures or dominator cultures. See the Chalice and the Blade for a complete discussion.

existing patterns of domination was to begin with changing one's own power beliefs. She stated, "No movement has ever been more than an accumulation of small motions of people acting within their own spheres. In rearranging our lives, we participate in rearranging society" (p. 545).

Within the fields of organizational theory and behavior, power is often viewed as a form of control over the resources of the organization to maximize its efficiency and effectiveness (Scott, 1992). Much of the literature on school reform, if it is to be successful, assumes that tacit rules governing power relationships and decisions about the use of resources must be redefined and altered to affect success for all students (Barth, 1990; Goodlad, 1984; Hopfenberg, Levin, Meister, & Rogers, 1993). Site-based management (SBM) assumes that by expanding teacher involvement in decision making, teachers will subsequently increase their commitment to school improvement which, in turn, will impact student learning (Bredeson, 1989; Dobbs, 1993; and Smylie, 1992). But, according to Weiss and Cambone (1994) principals who were committed to SBM coupled with a vision of a reform agenda were the most effective in altering the practices in their schools. The process of sharing power in and of itself was not effective in changing the routines in the classroom. Principals who used SBM along with other influence tactics were more likely to promote school reform and affect the most positive changes.

Power in and of itself is neither good nor bad, however, when power is put into action, it becomes political (Foucault, 1972; Shafritz and Ott, 1987; Pfeffer, 1992). The political context in which schools are situated influences the action (or inaction) that school leaders take to make them more or less democratic places for teachers to work. Similarly, teachers' responses to changes in power relations also affect the outcomes of democratizing schools (Glickman, 1993; Hargreaves, 1994; Limerick & Cunnington, 1993). The ways in which principals and teachers respond to changes in power relations may be a result of the political culture in which schools function, and thus explain why political culture may engender value conflicts for principals and teachers who subscribe

strongly to beliefs about the democratization of schools (Ackerman, Donaldson, & Van Der Bogert, 1996). This is particularly true when the norms in the political culture continue to hold principals solely responsible for such things as student performance measures on standardized test scores. Holding only principals responsible is a contradictory practice to sharing power and may actually inhibit the practices of shared power.[2] Implicit in this form of accountability is the assumption that principals should continue to exert control and power over teachers to raise test scores, negating a form of shared responsibility and accountability.

Political Culture Theory

How educators view educational policy such as SBM has much to do with the political culture in which their values and aspirations are shaped. Values generate conflict over state and local educational policies. Political culture is a subset of the general culture, composed of traditional ideas, historically derived and selected, with specific values attached to them (Kincaid, 1982). Culture is transmitted through socialization and mentoring and shapes how people view such things as politics, who determines policy, the rules of the game and who should get involved. Political culture governs behavior and often becomes second nature to people, determining who gets what, when and how.

Elazar's (1972) political culture theory proposed that the national culture is made up of three major political subcultures with a unique synthesis of Marketplace and Commonwealth philosophical orientations. The Marketplace orientation was defined as individuals and groups bargaining with one another, while the Commonwealth orientation assumes that all people share undivided interest. In the Commonwealth philosophical position, people wanted to cooperate to create and maintain the best government with shared moral principles. Within these two philosophical orientations was the interface of

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[2] Many states publish test results and label failed schools. In some cases principals have been removed from schools with the assumption they alone were responsible for low test scores.

the three major political subcultures of Individualistic, Moralistic and Traditionalistic. Elazar hypothesized that all three of these subcultures were divided proportionately across the US. Each subculture was strongly tied to a section of the country and provided a historical context to interpret how people engaged in the political processes that shaped their beliefs and habits.

Individualistic subcultures were located in the middle states and were linked with a philosophical orientation of the Marketplace. Government programs were strictly utilitarian and needed strong public support for a basis for change. Traditionalistic subcultures were found in Southern states and were viewed as instruments to promote individual opportunity though agribusiness, similar to a feudal aristocracy in the form of a plantation economy. The emphasis was placed on the preservation of a traditional life style. Politics were enacted through the social dominance of power elites in closed circles often referred to as "good old boy" networks.

Moralistic subcultures were located in the New England states and viewed government as a positive instrument to promote public and social good through voluntary and public action. In this study, each of the schools that comprised the US sample was situated within the context of the Traditionalistic subcultures, with variations on this subculture found in the states of Georgia and Florida which were a combination of the Traditional and Individualistic. Alabama, in contrast can be viewed within the Traditionalistic culture.[3]

A criticism of Elazar's theory is that it failed to acknowledge marginalized voices within a dominant political culture (Spring, 1993). Schools have been accused of further perpetuating the inequities in society by distributing knowledge that ensures that the dominant elites stay in positions of power. The cultural norms of a dominant group exert

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[3] In contrasting the political reform in all three states, both Georgia and Florida have enacted state reform measures before Alabama to increase shared decision making at the school level. Alabama, in constrast, just recently enacted the Govenor's Foundation Program in response to an Equity Suit.

power over individuals which can produce profound effects in shaping individuals' belief systems (Hackman, 1993). The next section summarizes some of the more salient research on group theory that examines why dominant ideologies often go unchallenged.

Group Theory

The research conducted by social psychologists investigating group influences on individuals can assist educators in providing a framework to examine power constructions. In a review of the literature on the dynamics of group and individual relationships in organizations, Hackman (1993) divided these influences into two major areas in which norms act on individual behavior and beliefs. He defined the two divisions as pervasive norms (ambient stimuli) found throughout the culture, some of which are covert, rarely noticed or discussed, or norms that are consciously selected (discretionary stimuli), and unique to particular groups. The effects of these norms often impinge upon how groups have restricted information, made decisions, and implemented decisions (Janis, 1972). Hackman summarized the reasons groups have employed group norms:

- to educate and socialize new members
- to produce uniformity
- to create diversity (p.213).

The social influence of group norms provides an immediate context for individual beliefs to be reinforced. Group norms are either unconsciously or consciously enacted (Weick, 1995). Subsequently, these norms impact upon individuals' behaviors and thus both indirectly and directly shape their beliefs and actions. In order to change existing beliefs, dominant group norms must be challenged for their incongruities with other organizational goals, such as an analysis of how power is shared (or not shared). Mohrman, Lawler III, and Mohrman (1992) found that for any organization wishing to develop an involvement-management style, redesign of most of the features within the organization was required. They concluded their analysis by indicating that without the inclusion of teachers in this change process, there was little hope for organizational

learning, with support for restructuring teachers' practices and relationships in classrooms. Only through the education of group members and/or situational and task redesign was there a possibility for changing these norms.

Power beliefs reflect how group norms are enacted (Weick, 1995). The enactment of these beliefs is reflected in the relationships and practices of group members that are either known or unknown constructions of power (Senge, 1990). Group theory offers an explanation as to why the social system norms exert such a strong force over the power beliefs of individuals and groups within schools. The works of Senge (1990), Argyris and Schon (1978), Garvin (1993) and other scholars call for an increased use of active group engagement in reflection and dialogue. Senge recognized that for an organization to build its internal capacities for learning, unexamined beliefs (group norms) needed to be unpacked and examined to reveal practices of *power and control over*.

The last section concludes with a discussion of several context variables that make up an organization's internal and external environment. Increasingly, these environmental context variables are being examined by researchers for their relevance in understanding differences across schools, districts and other agencies (Blase, 1991; Finnan & Hopfenberg, 1994; Marshall & Mitchell, 1991; Tyack & Tobin, 1993; Wehlage, Smith, & Lipman 1992).

Context

Several notable researchers have recognized that context variables are worthy of considerable examination. In an edited book by McLaughlin, Talbert and Bascia (1990), scholars were urged to rethink the meaning of context "by taking a deep and broad look at the multifaceted influences on teachers' work" (p. viii). They, along with other scholars, examined the "multiple embedded contexts that have effects on teachers' work" (p.viii) such as the sociocultural and organizational contexts, and the impacts of particular reform movements. Metz (1990) reported the consequences of context in her study of eight high schools in this edited collection. Although there were striking similarities in the

curriculum and the design of all the high schools, what made them different was the meaning and assumptions shared by group members within the schools. Metz concluded that community, student body, and teachers' backgrounds affected teachers' definitions of work.

Similarly, Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton, and Oakes (1995) found in their study of detracking that community context influenced considerable differences in how detracking was viewed. Additionally, methodology for studying detracking effects called for a more constructivist approach to fully understand the complexities of the contextual variables of the schools under investigation. Each school presented a unique set of circumstances in which each of their 10 cases took on a different size, shape and form.

Schools operate within the larger environment in which they are situated. This environment according to Keith & Girling (1991) is contextualized within several arenas of action such as the school, district, state and federal levels. Since schools are open systems affected by their surroundings, they are influenced by the political ideologies and the group norms within them that comprise the larger context in which teachers' work is situated (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Bailey and Cambell (1992) discussed that as far back as colonial times, women dominated the teaching profession. Today 72% of all elementary and secondary teachers are women. In contrast, 72% of principals and 95% of the superintendents are male.

Although much work has been done to show that women create a different type of context, Enomoto (1995) argued that women and minorities work within a discourse in which they did not construct. According to Lips (1991), women work in a historical construction of male definitions of power. Because of this, most women implicitly and uncritically accept these norm-referent assumptions, beliefs, and values. Likewise, Brunner and Duncan (1995) stated that women fear that the dominant male culture will brand them as unsuccessful if they do not fit into the male constructions of power. Marshall discovered (1994) in her study of eight atypical administrators that race and

gender conflicts were often suppressed by the larger political and social contexts within which these administrators worked.

All of the above examples demonstrate the effects of context on the work of teachers' and administrators. Context constitutes both the political culture and teachers' workplaces. Norms within these contexts exert tremendous influence over teachers' beliefs of power. Questions surrounding unexamined norms, which have perpetuated the lack of shared power in schools, must be raised if schools are to transform their workplaces into more democratic places. However, as Brunner and Duncan (1995) illustrated, one of the norms for females may include the norm of fear for bringing hegemonic practices to the surface. Others scholars such as Senge (1990) continue to call for a thorough examination of all norms which perpetuate domination and control over practices of power.

Method

This study was a primary data analysis involving a sample of individuals employed in three states, Florida, Georgia, and Alabama, and one Canadian province, Nova Scotia. Its primary purpose was to determine whether a number of personal and/or demographic variables influenced respondents' perceptions of power. Specifically, this survey research study addressed the following questions:

1. What is the effect, if any, of gender, age, years of teaching experience, and highest degree attained on educators' perceptions of power?

2. What is the effect, if any, of type of school community, level of school employed in, and residence of employment on educators' perceptions of power?

3. What is the effect, if any, of gender, level of school, and citizenship on educators' perceptions of power?

Instrumentation

To address the research questions of this study, a survey instrument was developed to include items that reflected both "female" and "male" viewpoints with respect to power,

empowerment, accountability, responsibility, and resources. The items were developed directly from the themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis of an open-ended questionnaire used in the Acker-Hocevar, Touchton, and Zenz (1995) study (N=120).

Using a four-point scale that ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," survey respondents were asked to rate, the extent to which they agreed with forty items related to perceptions of power, empowerment, accountability, responsibility, and resources. A fifth anchor point allowed respondent to indicate "don't know" where applicable. Respondents who indicated "don't know" to any items were eliminated from the analyses. Several items on the survey were negatively stated and employed reverse scales (i.e. lowest score on scale represented response with highest value), therefore, their items were recoded to reflect the appropriate values.

Data Collection

Between November 1995 and January 1996, 1000 surveys were disseminated to a convenience sample of teachers, administrators, guidance counselors and other educational personnel in three states, Florida, Georgia and Alabama, and one province, Nova Scotia, Canada. Respondents were given time to complete the surveys during faculty meetings. In all, 668 completed surveys were returned for processing, which is indicative of an overall response rate of 66.8%

Data Analysis

The SPSS computer software program (SPSS Inc., 1995) was used to analyze the data with the default option for missing data (listwise deletion) employed. This resulted in the deletion of cases with missing data on any of the items being used for a specific analysis. To examine the relationships among the forty survey items, several preliminary data analyses were conducted. A matrix depicting the zero-order correlation coefficients of the forty items was examined. Items (N=10) which exhibited small correlation coefficients (less than .30) with other items were eliminated from subsequent analyses. The remaining 30 items were used to conduct a principal components analysis using

squared multiple correlations as initial communalities estimates. Using the Kaiser criterion, the scree plot, and a parallel analysis (Humphreys & Motanelli, 1975), two factors (eigenvalues = 2.22 and 1.29) were retained. An orthogonal rotation converged in three iterations resulting in each of the 30 items loading high on one of the two factors (greater than .50) and low on the other. The two factors accounted for 51% of the common variance in the items. Factor 1 consisted of 17 items and evidenced a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .72. Factor 2 consisted of 13 items and yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .59. Scores on each of the two factors were computed for each respondent. After an examination of the types of items that loaded highly on each of the two factors, the first was named Organizational Beliefs Concerning Empowerment and Resource Control, and the second was named Personal Beliefs about Accountability, Responsibility, Powerful Educators, and Practices of Power.

The two factor scores were used as continuous, dependent variables in subsequent analyses. Three multivariate analysis of variance procedures (MANOVAS) were conducted to test for significant main and interaction effects. The first MANOVA examined the effects of the personal demographic variables (gender, age, years of experience in education, and highest degree attained) on the dependent variables. The second MANOVA examined the effects of the school-related or context variables (level of school, type of school community and residence of employment) on the dependent variables. Finally, the third Manova examined the effects of gender, level of school, and citizenship on the dependent variables.

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

There were 668 participants in the study, with 536 females and 130 male participants (2 people did not respond to this item). All of the respondents were from public education, with the majority of responses coming from white, non-Hispanic participants (N=586 or 87%). Most of the male respondents were employed in junior/middle (N=42) and high schools (N=64) while the majority of female respondents

were employed in the elementary schools (N=299). Elementary teachers comprised over one-half of the participants (N=326), followed by high school participants (N=245), and junior high/middle school participants (N=98). Respondents were from three states, Florida (N= 239), Alabama (N=177), Georgia (N=79), and one Canadian province, Nova Scotia (N=174). Over 70% of the respondents were between the ages of 31-50. Over one-half of the teachers had obtained degrees past their Bachelors with little difference evident in male and female degree attainment. All levels of school (elementary, junior/middle school, and high school) were represented across rural, urban and suburban communities. However, not all the states were equally represented across the three different types of communities.

Results of Data Analysis

Effects of Personal Demographic Variables on Power Perceptions

Research Question 1. What is the effect, if any, of gender, age, years of teaching experience, and highest degree attained on educators' perceptions of power?

To address this question, a multivariate analysis was used. The respondents' scores on the two "power" factors served as the dependent variables. Four independent variables were analyzed: gender, age, years of experience, and highest degree attained. Although the results indicated no statistically significant four-way interaction effect, several three-way interactions were statistically significant. Although the results of the MANOVA were not significant, a univariate F-test revealed a statistically significant three-way interaction between gender, years of teaching experience, and age on Factor 2: Personal Beliefs ($F(4,547) = 2.44$, $p<.04$). A second statistically significant three-way interaction was obtained between degree, years of teaching experiences, and age (Wilks' Lambda = .943, $F(18,1092)=1.81$, $p<.04$). Followup univariate tests indicated that the three-way interaction was significant on Factor 1: Organizational Beliefs only ($F(9,547) = 2.01$, $p<.03$). The only significant main effect that was not subsumed in higher order interaction effects was that of degree attained ($F(2, 547)=4.65$, $p<.01$) which proved to

have a significant effect on Factor 2: Personal Beliefs. Mean scores on Factor 2 were significantly higher for those respondents who had attained a Bachelor's degree than for those who had attained a Master's or higher degree.

Effects of Context Variables on Power Perceptions

Research Question 2. What is the effect, if any, of type of school community, level of school employed in, and residence of employment on educators' perceptions of power?

To address this question, a multivariate analysis was used. The respondents' scores on the two "power" factors served as the dependent variables. Three independent variables were analyzed; type of school community (rural, urban, and suburban), residence of employment (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Nova Scotia), and level of school (elementary, junior high/middle, and high school). Results of the multivariate analysis indicated that there were no significant three-way interactions, however, a significant two-way interaction was obtained between type of school community and level of school (Wilks' Lambda = .943, $F(8,904)=3.27$, $p<.001$).

As a follow-up to the significant multivariate test, univariate analyses of variance were computed for each of the two factors. Results of these univariate F tests indicated that the two-way interaction between type of school community and level of school was significant for both Factor 1: Organizational Beliefs ($F(4, 453) = 4.15$, $p<.003$) and Factor 2: Personal Beliefs ($F(4, 453) = 2.39$, $p<.05$). Mean scores on Factor 1; Organizational Beliefs were significantly higher for educators employed in elementary suburban schools (.117) than they were for either urban elementary (-.231) or rural elementary (-.235) schools. The mean scores for educators employed in both urban and rural schools were very similar. At the junior high/middle school level, the differences between the mean scores on Factor 1 for the three types of school communities were less varied than were the means for the elementary educators, however the means for suburban and rural educators were similar (.081 and .053) and significantly higher than for

educators employed in urban schools (-071). At the high school level, educators in suburban schools evidenced a significantly higher mean score (.479) than did educators in either rural (-.003) or urban (.057) schools.

Mean scores on Factor 2: Personal Beliefs, at the elementary level, were highest for rural educators (.132) followed by suburban educators (.123) and significantly lower for those employed in urban schools (-.136). At the junior high/middle school level, educators employed in urban schools demonstrated mean scores (.355) that were significantly higher than those in rural schools (-.002) which, in turn, were significantly higher than those in suburban schools (-.409). At the high school level, mean scores for Factor 2 were less varied. Educators working in urban schools evidenced the highest mean scores (.141) followed by suburban educators (-.101) and finally rural educators (-.156).

The only significant main effect that was not subsumed in a higher order interaction was that of residence of employment ($F(3,613)=5.84, p<.001$) which proved to have a significant effect on Factor 1: Organizational Beliefs. Mean scores on Factor 1 were significantly higher for those respondents from Florida (.495), than for those from Alabama (.160) or Georgia (.028). Respondents from Nova Scotia evidenced the lowest mean score (-.212) on Factor 1.

Research Question 3. What is the effect, if any, of gender, level of school, and citizenship on educators' perceptions of power?

To address this question, a multivariate analysis was used. The respondents' scores on the two "power" factors served as the dependent variables. Three independent variables were analyzed; gender, level of school (elementary, junior high/middle, and high school), and citizenship (US and Canadian). The residence variable was recoded to reflect two categories: US respondents and Canadian respondents. Results of the multivariate analysis indicated that there were no significant three-way or two-way interaction effects, however, a significant main effect of citizenship was obtained (Wilks'

Lambda = .99, F(2,621)=3.08, p<.05). As a follow-up to the significant multivariate test, univariate analyses of variance were computed for each of the two factors. Results of these univariate F tests indicated that the main effect of citizenship was significant on Factor 1: Organizational Beliefs (F(1,622)=5.62,p<.02). Mean scores on Factor 1 were significantly higher for those respondents from the US (.066), than for those respondents from Canada (-.219).

Summary and Conclusions

Bearing in mind the potential limitations of this study, including the use of a convenience sample, the percentage of variance unaccounted for in the items used in the analyses (49%), and only a moderate Cronbach Alpha of .59 obtained on Factor 2, the following summary and conclusions are offered within the theoretical framework presented earlier.

Power Definitions

Findings indicated that the political and social context of schools shaped the power beliefs and practices of educators and perhaps minimized gender differences. Eisler's Dominator and Partnership Model suggests that sharing power results in less hierarchical structures. In the areas of responsibility and accountability, responses on the survey from both females and males reported ambiguity as to whether or not individuals were free to take on more responsibility, thus more power. Only 59% of the respondents indicated that this was true in their present work sites. Another 65% of the respondents stated that accountability was related to laws, efficiency, and position held. Eighty-one percent of the teachers viewed a powerful educator as being able to cut through red tape, and 95% of the teachers felt a powerful educator was able to access resources for their school.

Results indicated that females and males shared similar perspectives of power, with evidence of more collaborative structures to make shared decisions. Educators agreed that power structures were changing in schools (79%) and also that power was defined within the context of collegiality and shared decision making (86%). In fact, only 38% of

the teachers indicated that power is still a top-down phenomenon, i.e., administrators exert *power over* teachers. Respondents agreed that empowered educators should be allowed to make decisions, be afforded direct involvement in the implementation of decisions, be free to make changes, and be able to do one's job with minimal supervision within a context of administrative support. Of some concern, however, was the fact that 68% of respondents believed that resources are a form of control, used to reward and remunerate others.

The greatest source of power for respondents appeared to be knowledge. Over 96% of the respondents strongly agreed that a powerful educator has and uses knowledge, with the same percentage agreeing that knowledge is a resource that exerts power. Teachers appear to want administrators to be supportive, but not to limit their autonomy to affect changes with students. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents agreed that they used their professional power in the classroom to reach students through their teaching, choosing of curricula, and selection of materials. Similarly, ninety-eight percent of the respondents viewed a powerful educator as having control over the learning environment to impact students.

Overall, power structures appear to be changing in some areas (i.e. Florida and Alabama) where teachers tend to view empowerment as their involvement in making and implementing decisions. This involvement seems to be more powerful when it is directly linked to the classroom. Educators do not see empowerment as being free from administrators (84% of the respondents disagreed), however many see a powerful educator as free (62%). There was only one item, "an empowered educator is one who is free from administrators", to which more males agreed (27%) than did females (10%).

Collectively, the survey responses have implications for school leaders. Many respondents characterized a powerful educator as one who is able to access resources, is knowledgeable, cuts through red tape, and creates collegial working places, which is indicative of a Partnership perspective rather than a Dominator one that has existed in the

past. The fact that respondents were in strong agreement that a powerful educator was one that empowered others through listening and good communication skills further suggests that administrators and teachers for tomorrow's schools must possess effective interpersonal skills as well as be good facilitators of decision making. As a result of the variability in the responses of items related to accountability and responsibility, it appears necessary for educators to first come to a common understanding of these terms. In order for a "true" powershift to occur in schools, all educators must share in the accountability and responsibility for their decisions. The ambiguity with respect to accountability and responsibility may be indicative that teacher empowerment is really in its infancy in today's schools.

Political Culture, Group Theory and Context

Political culture theory offers a potential explanation for the significant interaction effect between the type of school community and the level of school employed on both respondents' organizational and personal power beliefs. Educators working in urban, rural, and suburban communities are located in different political cultures that exert pressure over the micro politics in their schools. Results indicated that overall suburban elementary, middle and high schools had more positive organizational power beliefs. Based on Elazar's Political Culture Theory (1972) of Traditionalistic subcultures, one would not expect to find significant differences in beliefs about power among educators in Florida, Alabama, and Georgia. However, results of this study indicated otherwise. Florida educators evidenced a higher mean score than either Alabama or Georgia educators on Factor 1: Organizational beliefs. This finding could be attributed to the fact that educators from Florida in this study participated in extensive administrator training in Managing Productive Schools. Gender only proved to be significant in a 3-way interaction with years of experience and age on Personal beliefs of power. As Enomoto (1995) posited, the male construction of power has traditionally been a dominant ideological perspective that has left women out of its construction. The results of our

study lend support for Enomoto's position in that no gender effects were found in Organizational beliefs of power.

Group theory offers an explanation for the effects of the contextual variables on power beliefs. Differences in suburban, rural, and urban schools, along with the different group norms found in elementary, middle, and high schools, provide evidence of the variation in group influences over their members. This influence varies from level of school, and type of community and interacts across these two areas on both personal and organizational beliefs of power.

In conclusion, we offer a possible explanation as to the differences between the findings of this study and the initial study. In contrasting the findings of the two studies, a post-structural interpretation as posited by Foucault (1972) is useful. According to Foucault, knowledge is produced by individuals within a domain of possibilities inherent in the existing language or discourse. Language is replete with its own rules within the particular field that the discourse is situated. Therefore, it is possible, that when the males and females in the current study were presented with the statements that represented gendered perspectives, the language was not one of difference, but one of sameness as to the continued domination of power over teachers and the emerging partnership. The open-ended questionnaire used in the initial study was a vehicle for teachers to use their own language. Thus, the female language of domination surfaced. However, when the survey was rated by both females and males, the findings suggested that both groups responded to the language of domination in similar proportions. The open-ended questionnaire was a vehicle for gender differences to surface because it permitted a mechanism for a language of contrast among both females and males. The survey, on the other hand, became a bounded system of existing possibilities. Gender differences in language were appropriated by the political and social systems in which these educators worked.

Suggestions for Future Studies

Certain assumptions were made about the effects of gender on participants' beliefs from our initial study, however, the political and social contexts in which teachers worked minimized these gender differences. It appears that the impact of these context variables have implications for future research in constructions of power both for policy makers and school reform leaders alike. Further, the results of this study imply the need for more studies, both of a qualitative and quantitative nature, that examine power beliefs in states and districts where a commitment has been made to transform teachers' workplaces into more democratic places of work.

Initial results of this study warrant further research focusing on the refinement of the survey instrument with a more random sample of educators. Additionally, the interaction effects of type of school community by level of school are of particular interest and should be followed up through further exploration in an effort to explicate reasons why middle/junior high school educators in urban, rural, and suburban schools demonstrate wide variability on Factor 2: Personal Beliefs about Power and much less variability on Factor 1: Organizational beliefs about power. Continued research in this area would benefit policy makers in their efforts to assist educators in the development of processes that will enable the thorough examination of the political and social cultures of schools. Such an examination would afford better understanding of how these cultures influence power beliefs.

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